

FACTS and Myths about the Subsidized Guardianship Waiver Demonstration Project.

The subsidized guardianship program has been up and running for the last 8 months. To date there have been three guardianships established. The two tables below offer a picture of children in each service area who are part of the subsidized guardianship program. The rest of this document provides additional information about some of the areas where feedback has suggested there may be misunderstandings about program requirements and benefits of subsidized guardianship.

Table 1: Children Eligible for Subsidized Guardianships and Number of Guardianships Established By Service Area as of September, 2007.

Service Area	Number of Eligible Children	Number of Guardianships Established
Ames	95	1
Cedar Rapids	154	
Council Bluffs	89	
Davenport	110	
Des Moines	215	1
Dubuque	65	
Sioux City	123	
Waterloo	79	1

Table 2: Current Permanency Goal of children in the Subsidized Guardianship Waiver Project

Permanency Goal	Control Group (not eligible for SG)	Experimental Group (eligible for SG)	All Children
Adoption	1	6	7
Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	367	863	1230
Long Term Foster Care		1	1
Remain in Home	2		2
Return Child to Home	9	15	24
Transfer Custody or Guardianship to Relative	12	28	40
Transfer Custody to Other Parent	1		1
Transfer Guardianship/Custody to Suitable Person	11	17	28

Myth: Siblings must be placed together with the same guardian or they are not eligible for Subsidized Guardianship.

Fact: When a child is determined eligible for subsidized guardianship, their siblings are also considered eligible for subsidized guardianship so long as other permanency options have been ruled out. While it may be in the children's best interests to place them together, they may be placed with separate guardians and still receive the subsidy.

Myth: All children must have lived with the potential guardian for 6 months prior to the establishment of a guardianship.

Fact: This “living with” requirement was included in the rules for subsidized guardianship to help ensure that there is a significant relationship between the child and the potential guardian to help increase the chances that the guardianship will offer a permanent place for the child to live and to ensure a relationship that will last for the lifetime of the child and guardian. In circumstances where a significant relationship already exists between the child and the potential guardian an exception to policy may be granted to waive the “living with” requirement.

Myth: Children who are placed in a subsidized guardianship would not be eligible for Aftercare Services, including PAL.

Fact: Ok this one is not really a myth. Children in subsidized guardianship are not eligible for Aftercare Services, including PAL. However, it is important to understand the purpose of Aftercare Services. These services were designed to provide a safety net for youth who age out of foster care, and have little or no family support. PAL is a financial benefit that may be available to youth who participate in Aftercare Services, but is not intended to be a long term support. Subsidized guardianship, for the young person and the potential guardian, presents an opportunity for a permanent connection and life-long support. Yes, Aftercare and PAL would not be available if the subsidized guardianship choice is made, however it is expected that the young person’s needs would be met, as in any family, by the guardian.

Myth: Children in subsidized guardianship are not eligible for MIYA after they turn 18.

Fact: This is also true. However, health care coverage may be accessed through other means. The youth may be covered under the guardian’s plan and can remain covered under the conditions of the plan. HAWK-i, may also be available, as well as Medicaid based on the child’s income. It may also be possible to access a student based health insurance program at reasonable costs.

Myth: Children who get subsidized guardianship won’t be able to get financial aid to attend a college or technical school.

Fact: While children who have been in a subsidized guardianship placement are not eligible for the All-Iowa Opportunity Foster Care Grant program, they should be able to qualify for a number of grants or scholarship programs that are available to help low income children and families like the PELL grant or the All Iowa Opportunity Grant Program and the ETV program (for children aged 16 or older at the time the guardianship was established). There are numerous other grant opportunities available as well as student loans. Children seeking post secondary education should be encouraged to

contact the financial aid offices of the schools they are interested in to explore these options in more detail.

Myth: The child's behavior is too unstable to approach a potential guardian.

Fact: Studies have shown that the permanency and stability offered by a guardianship placement or other permanent placement helps to moderate a child's behavior. If there is a potential guardian, bring them into the child's team as soon as possible to assess if this is a viable option, and to work with the child and potential guardian to move towards permanency when it is appropriate to do so.

Myth: The child has just moved into a new placement therefore it is too early to consider a guardianship.

Fact: It is never too soon to consider guardianship. The potential of guardianship for a child should be part of the decision making processes from the time the child is first placed out of the home. Identifying potential guardians early as part of the concurrent planning process will help decrease the time a child remains in temporary foster care.

Myth: Subsidized guardianship is not available because the potential guardian lives in another state.

Fact: The state that the guardian lives in has no impact on the ability to receive a subsidy. If the guardianship is in the best interests of the child a subsidy can be paid even when the child and guardian will reside in another state.

Myth: Potential guardians can't afford to pay an attorney to represent them in the guardianship proceedings and to do the necessary court filings.

Fact: Attorney fees are one of the non recurring expenses that can be reimbursed to the guardian, just as if they were adopting the child.

Resources for additional information on subsidized guardianship:

Training Materials:

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Employees' Manual:

Title 13 Chapter D(1) GUARDIANSHIP SUBSIDY

http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/policyanalysis/PolicyManualPages/Manual_Documents/Master/13-d1.pdf

FACS Entries:

<\\Hoovr3s1\FACS\Desk aides and Tips from the Help desk\Subsidized Guardianship entries for FACS.ppt>